

Parks and Recreation - 1919

100,000 PEOPLE ASK PLAYGROUND FOR 'BLACK BELT'

Petition Says 500 North Harlem Children Are Killed Yearly in Streets.

Although there are now more than 100,000 colored persons living in North Harlem, there is not a single inch of playground space available in the so-called "black belt" of this city, according to James H. Hubert, executive secretary of the Urban League, which has petitioned the Park Department to purchase certain lots in the colored district to be used as playgrounds.

The petition sent to the Park Department was signed by Mr. Hubert as well as by Mrs. E. T. Roberts, of the executive board of the Urban League; Jacob Theobald, the white principal of public school 89; Ruth Fisher, of the Colored Y. W. C. A., and Enoch Newton, of the North Harlem Community Council.

The petition says that in the district between 139th and 145th streets and between Eighth avenue and the Harlem River, which is mainly inhabited by colored people, there is no playground, while the population is now so dense that not a single apartment is vacant there. Moreover, it goes on to say, while many of the apartments are meant only to house four or five persons, they are now frequently occupied by ten or twelve.

500 KILLED IN YEAR.

Many of those living in these congested conditions are children, according to a survey made by the Urban League. The same survey shows that the streets in the district are very much congested with traffic. Yet they are the children's only playgrounds. The result of forcing the children to use them—in their escape from the overcrowded houses—is that 500 to 700 little ones are killed by vehicles in the colored district every year.

The petition from the Urban League also cites the fact that while the Parks and Playgrounds Association succeeded last year in having one or two streets designated as play

streets, this year there is not a single play street in the district. For this no official explanation has been forthcoming, it is said.

"It is a shame that the city should treat our district like this," said Mr. Hubert. "We have more colored pupils in Public School 89 than there are in Tuskegee Institute. The population is always growing, but the city shows no sign of awakening to the fact that our children need playing space if they are to grow up healthy."

INTEREST IN ELECTION.

The colored population is now very much interested over the coming aldermanic elections, and is pressing this question of proper playgrounds for the children to the utmost. For the first time, both Republicans and Democrats in the Twenty-first District have nominated colored candidates. Dr. Charles H. Roberts has been chosen by the Republicans, and Frank Wheaton, lawyer, will make the fight for the Democrats.

It is expected that both these candidates will be fully pledged to do their utmost to secure playing spaces for the children. Both the Urban League and the North Harlem Community Council believe that if the grievances of the colored population in this matter are properly aired, the Board of Estimate will be induced to relieve them.

There are three available sites for playgrounds suggested by the colored organizations. These are vacant lots at 139th and 140th streets, between Lenox and Seventh avenues; the ball grounds at 144th and 145th streets, between the same avenues, and the open space at 141st street and the Harlem River.

It is considered significant by the colored people that the agitation to have all of these, or at least one of them, secured for the public was begun by Mrs. E. T. Roberts as chairman of an organization of colored women workers. The men of the district have now lined up behind the women in the determination to secure a "lung" for this congested part of the city.

Although, according to officials at city hall, it is not probable that the petition of the colored organizations will be granted now because of lack of funds, there is every likelihood that a well-organized campaign by colored voters would influence the Board of Estimate to appropriate the necessary funds.

IS HUMILIATED BY A WHITE OFFICER

The Birmingham

One of the most humiliating stories ever told with reference to a colored citizen was told by Mr. P. F. Clark, a man who has spent practically his entire life in this district, and whose interests have always been for the betterment of the community and the peaceful and helpful relation that should exist between the races.

Last Wednesday Mr. Clark happened to be in the neighborhood of the Avondale Zoo Park, controlled by City Government and supported by the taxpayers of the city. Mr. Clark had his boy with him and this boy is between the ages of ten and eleven years, and to interest the kid his father states that he simply walked through the park, showing him a few fish and the boy was attracted by white boys who were then in swimming and he asked his father permission to look on, it was done. Mr. Clark stated that he continued his walk through the park when he was assaulted by a police officer with rough expressions, ordering him out of the park, telling him frankly that Negroes are not allowed in it, and insisted on Clark leaving the park without his son. When some white men near by insisted that he should stay until his boy had returned to him.

Mr. P. F. Clark is one of the oldest colored citizens in Jefferson County. He has helped to build the city and according to his statement and record, he has been a tax payer in Birmingham for more than 30 years. That he is humiliated, that he is discouraged, that he feels fretted and refused to tell his little son what the officer had said to him, is only expressing his own words and his own position. Mr. Clark says that when the officer spoke to his boy, he thundered at him as if talking to a heathen, or some ordinary low animal.

Using his words: "I am a Southern born man. I love the South. I understand the South. I have many white and colored friends here in Birmingham. I have advised all along that the South is the best place for the colored man. I have not made many public speeches nor have I written long articles, but I am in contact with my people every day and have had occasions more than a thousand times to disagree with some of our best men on this question. I say to you frankly, Mr. Editor, that this kind of treatment will make me or any other decent man leave his home, if he can't get protection against it. I was ashamed to tell my boy what the officer said to me. I was humiliated when he spoke to my boy in that way—nothing but a child, and he abused him in that way. I don't know how others are treated, but this is too much for me."

COLORED PEOPLE GET PLAYGROUND

The Birmingham
PLANS BEING ARRANGED FOR A FIRST CLASS PAVILION AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS.

The Colored Playground Association that has been operating for the past five or six years on the North Ensley car line, at what is known as Dozier's Park, will open up this year with some very attractive and interesting improvements. The work is being directed by Mr. Mack Dozier, as President and Mr. J. W. Brown as Vice President. This is the only organization in the city that is offering out-of-door recreation for children and the public as well. Mr. Dozier announces that through the co-operation of the public he has been able to work out plans for a large pavilion on the grounds where speaking and indoor entertainments can be had. This is understood to be one of the very necessary improvements at the park, and it is believed that the people will support the idea enthusiastically and generously. The committee also announces that a swimming pool, baseball park, swings and seats and a tennis court will be a part of the improvements that are now under consideration, and will be in operation at the opening day of the park, or a large number of them.

The committee, through Mr. Dozier, states that the public has already shown interest by endorsing the idea and furnishing money for some of these improvements, and it is also pointed out that the city commissioners have been waited upon, and they have given their sanction to the effort and will support the movement by endorsement and otherwise. The need of such an organization among colored people is imperative, and because of the location and convenience to the car lines and automobile travel, it invites such consideration as will make it a success. The committee wishes to announce that those who desire to help in the work may call Phone Main 7720-J or write Mr. Mack Dozier, 1401 9th St., N. Arrangements for picnics and the like can be made over this phone or by writing this address. Many of the leading churches and Sunday

Schools in past years have had their picnics and outings in this park, and it is stated that satisfactory amusement, as well as arrangements, were always found.

NEGROES WILL HAVE LOCAL RECREATION CENTER

As a result of a conference between representatives of the executive committee of the war camp community service and local negroes, relative to the inauguration of a negro community service in Galveston, arrangements have been completed for the lease of a building to serve as a recreation center. Various committees have been appointed, some temporarily, others permanently, and these will report at a meeting of war camp community officials Sunday, Jan. 19.

The following comprise the executive committee of the negro war camp community service:

E. M. Henderson, temporary chairman; E. B. Jones, temporary secretary; H. T. Davis, temporary vice chairman; J. R. Gibson, Dr. R. H. Stanton, J. E. Johnson, T. W. Patrick, P. A. Winters, Mrs. Nettie McCullough, John Maxey, Shelton Banks and A. H. Gaston.

Miss Annie Williams was elected secretary in charge of the recreation center.

The following committee chairmen were appointed:

Church co-operating committee, S. H. Simpson; hospital committee, Miss C. E. Scull; canteen committee, Ed Hayes; special entertainment committee, W. P. Anderson; physical recreation, S. S. Sims; benevolent committee, Willis Woods; commercial relations committee, John L. Lewis; girls' activities committee, Miss Jessie McGuire; educational and library committee, T. H. Love; war chest committee, P. A. Winters chairman, T. W. Patrick, J. E. Johnson.

\$100,000.00 For a Bath House in Chicago

The Houston

Cleveland, O., June 7.—Councilman Thomas W. Fleming, the only member of the Race in the city council of Cleveland, has coming a candidate again for the office. The majority of the voters in the Eleventh Ward are colored. Councilman Fleming announced his intention of being recently been instrumental in having the city appropriate \$100,000 for a bath and recreation house in the center of the ward.

Cleveland is regarded as one of the most democratic cities in America, more than 50 Colored teachers being employed in the public schools, the majority teaching only white pupils. There are about 30,000 Colored people in Cleveland, thousands having come recently from the South, hundreds of the citizens own beautiful homes and there

are scores of successful business men. Cleveland has a total population of over 800,000, being the sixth city of the nation.

ALBANY N. Y. JOURNAL.
MAY 7, 1919

The Recreation Movement.

Opinion expressed in the Year Book of the Playground and Recreation Association of America, for 1918, just published, is that while the general effect that the war has had upon the movement for the establishment of playgrounds and recreation centers, cannot be definitely determined, there is no doubt that there has been an awakening to a keener sense of the importance of such opportunities for wholesome diversion and enjoyment after hours of work. The demand for them has become widespread. Both the number of recreation centers and the attendance have increased greatly.

Unquestionably the fact that 35 per cent of the men in the first draft were rejected as physically unfit has made Americans realize how essential are upbuilding exercise and recreation under the guidance of trained leaders. The statistics collected after correspondence with 1,700 cities indicate a healthy and steady progress in recreation work. The report of the association shows that more than 780 playgrounds were open all the year and evening recreation work was conducted in more than 700 schools of 101 cities. More than 8,000 trained men and women were engaged in directing play at recreation centers throughout the country. For Negro children alone more than 100 playgrounds were maintained. Three hundred swimming pools, four hundred public baths and two hundred public bathing beaches were used by thousands of persons.

The effect of the war upon playgrounds and recreation was reported by 277 cities, 172 of which give the result as unfavorable. Decrease in attendance is attributed to the fact that many of the older children were working in factories. Moreover, it was hard to get trained, competent leaders because of the number of men who went into the service of their country and of women who engaged in war work. In many cases, appropriations were cut down, playground funds were devoted to war garden activities and the playgrounds themselves were used by war agencies.

But 105 cities reported that the war, instead of checking recreation work, had stimulated it. The attendance of small children increased, as

did that of their elders at the evening sessions. Appropriations were enlarged and more centers established. The number of cities initiating such work was smaller than in 1917, being reduced to 20, but those cities which continued the work called for a greater number of leaders to conduct their greater activities.

On the whole, the year 1918 shows many gains. Everywhere community leaders and citizens participated in community singing, pageants and special community gatherings. Especially were they brought to realize what recreation, directed by trained leaders, meant to the men in uniform. This realization has given momentum to the recreational movement all over the United States.

HOPE CREST COMPANY GETS NEW TRUCK AND TRAILERS

Hope Crest Development Co., has just received a new Nash four ton truck, and two trail mobiles. The new truck, which is driven by both the back and front wheels, is the only one of its kind in the city. It accommodates forty people, while the two trailers provide good seating space for sixty persons, each making a total accommodation for 160 persons in the three vehicles. The company, in addition to these new vehicles has 2 Ford trucks and a Packard four ton truck and trailer. The company is now easily able to transport the patrons to and from its beautiful picnic grounds at Hope Crest, on the Isle of Hope River. The company is now constructing a new swimming pool at its resort, which will be 90 by 50 feet. When completed, it will be the only amusement of its kind offered. Negroes here, Other improvements are being made to the grounds. Six dressing rooms are being built for women and four for the men who are going to use the pool.

ATLANTA GA CONSTITUTION OCTOBER 21, 1919 BIG LAND TRACT TENDERED TO CITY FOR NEGRO PARK

The committee on church co-operation on behalf of the white churches of Atlanta has tendered to the city a tract of land containing 6.57 acres located between Lena and Ollie streets, not far from the Ashby street school, to be used as a park for negroes, the only condition attached being that the park be used in perpetuity for this purpose, and maintained by the city. Mayor Key sent the communication in which the offer of the gift was made, together with a message, to council Monday afternoon asking that it be referred to the proper committee or board. Council referred it to the park board.

MACON GA., TO BUILD PLAYGROUND FOR NEGRO CHILDREN

The Raleigh
(By the Associated Negro Press.)
Macon, Ga. (A. P.) J. C. Wyche, chairman of the playground committee of council, has approved the plan of a public playground for Negro Children. A petition for a recreation place come from Negro citizens, and the playground will be one of the most beautiful ever established in the south.

BIRMINGHAM MAIL NEWS MAY 7, 1919 Negro Playground Will Open Easter

The colored playground, known as the Greater Birmingham Playground at Dozier's park, Thrasher Station, or the Pratt-Ensley car line, will have its formal opening on Easter Sunday, and there will be speeches made by Commissioners Ellis Brown and J. H. Taylor Roderick Beddow and J. S. Davis, and some of the colored leaders of the city.

The Colored Playground Association has employed 25 teachers whose duties will be to look after the safety of the children at the playground, instruct them in the various games and apparatus installed at the park, and look after them while playing. On the grounds there are tennis courts, baseball diamonds, swings and other amusements for the children. A new pavilion has just been erected at the cost of \$2,000, 90 per cent of which has been contributed by the white people of the city.

Easter Sunday will be "Children's Day," and a large attendance is expected. Music will be furnished by one of the leading bands, and there also will be several choruses, one from the Methodist church, conducted by Bruce Thomas.

President Mack Dozier and Vice President J. W. Brown, of the Colored Playground Association, have been influential members in the advancement of the playground.

NORFOLK VA DISPATCH JULY 25, 1919 OPEN TONIGHT NEW COLORED PLAYGROUND

The property of Corey Institute has been graded and prepared for a playground for colored children of the neighborhood. William Hardison and several interested persons in the neighborhood of Corey school spent several weeks in filling low places heretofore unusable for play purposes.

This evening at 6:30 o'clock the ground will be formally opened with an interesting program and a band concert. Refreshments will be served.

Miss Carrie Dukes, recreation instructor, W. C. C. S., will be in charge of play activities on the ground and desires to have all the children of the neighborhood join her and her trained classes.

ATLANTA GA EVE JOURNAL
NOVEMBER 6, 1919

City Accepts Tract For Negro Park

Resolutions accepting a tract of land located near the Ashby Street school for use as a park for negroes were adopted Wednesday afternoon by the board of park commissioners. The tract was offered by the committee on church co-operation in behalf of the white evangelical ministers' association. The only terms the donors impose on the city is that the city maintain it. The tract contains more than six acres. City council on Monday likewise had formally accepted the offer.

PLAYGROUND FOR COLORED IS READY WASHINGTON D C TIMES AUGUST 3, 1919

Mrs. Sule Root Rhodes, supervisor of playgrounds, has announced that a new colored playground to be known as the "Johanna Collins Municipal playgrounds" will be opened on the vacant lot at Third and G streets northeast tomorrow morning.

Numerous petitions and requests have been received by the District Commissioners for a playground in this neighborhood. It is in line with these several requests the ground is opened. When colored boys of the northeast received word a playground might be opened at this lot they immediately went to work and cleaned the lot of several wagon loads of debris, making the lot ready for immediate occupancy. The lot was loaned by Johanna Collins.

Mrs. Rosa Stokes Netherlands will be director of the grounds for several weeks, and will be assisted by Miss Mary Dorsey. The caretaker will be Harry Morton. A daily average attendance of 800 colored children is expected on the grounds. The lot is just across from the Logan School and located more than twenty-five blocks from any other colored playground.

EL PASO TEXAS HERALD MAY 42, 1919 NEGROES WANT COURT.

The request of the Phyllis Wheatley Woman's club, a negro organization of El Paso, for a cement tennis court to be placed in their playgrounds, center of Latta street, was taken up at the Saturday council meeting. Mayor pro tem. R. C. Semple appointed aldermen Part Pitman and

W. T. Griffith as committee to ascertain if the playground is to be a permanent institution.

MACON GA TELEGRAPH JUNE 25, 1919

NEGRO PLAYGROUND OPENED

A new playground has been opened on Fourth avenue, Pleasant Hill. There were 350 negroes present when the playground was officially opened. The ground is well equipped. L. J. May has charge of the playground work.